

Libel jury stumps Botham and Lamb

Matthew Engel

THE cricketing celebrity Ian Botham is facing, if not quite ruin, then at least a severe blow to his lifestyle after losing his marathon libel case against the former Pakistan captain Imran Khan.

After 13 days in Court 13 at the High Court, the jury last week decided by a majority verdict against claims by Botham and his former England team-mate Allan Lamb that they had been called racist and lacking class by Imran in the magazine India Today. They also rejected by a majority Botham's charge that Imran had, by implication, called him a cheat in a British newspaper article.

Halfway through the trial Imran agreed that Botham did not cheat at cricket, and he will have to pay for that part of the case. However, after an exercise estimated to have cost £750,000, Botham and Lamb will have to bear the brunt.

Botham said he was "astounded" by the verdict, a view shared by many observers. Speculation during the jury's 42-hour deliberation centred only on the damages award. The judge, Mr Justice French, gave the jurors — seven men, five women — a notably curt thank you and then left, without a word of apology for obliging them to spend three weeks of high summer cooped up listening to an argument that was at best abstruse and at times absurd.

It was the second sudden defeat for English cricketers inside three days: England lost nine wickets to Pakistan's bowlers in the Lord's Test while George Carman QC was



Imran Khan and his wife, Jemima, leaving the High Court last week

PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

making his final speech on Imran's behalf. The implications for cricket are uncertain, though Pakistani players may now have enhanced respect for English decision-making, and it may help ensure that the rest of this summer's Test series is harmonious. It is good news for Imran's presumed career in Pakistani politics.

But the verdict has sent out a clear warning to potential litigants that the libel casino, once presumed

to be a certain source of ready cash, is now only about as safe as Lloyd's of London.

Imran gave thanks to the Almighty, rather than to Mr Carman, when he left with his pregnant wife, Sir James Goldsmith's daughter Jemima. Botham and Lamb, observing the best cricketing traditions, accepted the umpire's decision with as much grace as they could manage and Botham said he would just have to go back to his

roadshow to raise the cash. He will probably also have to spend more Christmases doing panto in provincial theatres.

More than a dozen England cricketers trooped through the courtroom giving evidence. The most astonishing performance came when Geoffrey Boycott, subpoenaed by Imran, appeared wearing no jacket and carrying a boot whose significance the judge never allowed him to explain.

The alleged libels were published in 1994, and in the hours before the case opened there were intense efforts by Imran's lawyers to reach a settlement. These foundered because the proffered apology was considered too grudging and because Botham and Lamb wanted damages — even though a third party had offered to pay both sides' costs up to that point.

As the case went on, and developed into a bonfire of fivers — about one every 20 seconds, according to the best guesses — there was a growing sense of the absurd.

Imran's attempts to prove Botham had cheated by picking the seam or gouging a cricket ball failed utterly when his videos from 14-year-old Test matches purporting to prove this were adopted by Botham's own counsel, Charles Gray QC, and clearly showed him manipulating, quite legally, a ball that had gone out of shape.

The argument then largely went into semantics about the distinction between cheating and merely breaking the rules. There was no consensus among the cricketers about whether ball-tampering had ever been accepted as custom and practice within the game.

Imran made no attempt to defend the suggestions that Botham and Lamb were racist or lacked class, and claimed that he had been misquoted.

In the absence of substantive disagreement between the parties, the jury may well have taken the view that the case should never have come to court.

Possibly they decided to punish the plaintiffs, as the presumed perpetrators of their incarceration. The legal system is such that we shall never know without breaking the rules, or perhaps cheating.

Yeltsin leaves trail of broken promises

James Meek in Moscow

THE most risky campaign promise Boris Yeltsin made was never spoken out loud. It was all in the twist of his big body as he jived on stage at those Russian rock concerts on the election trail in May. "Read my hips," he was saying. "I'm fightin' it."

It was a broken promise for which his age and health, rather than the sickness of the body politic he heads, was responsible. But when the ailing president took the oath of office in the Kremlin last week, the live television audience had plenty of other broken promises to remember.

The guests present at the short inauguration ceremony were conscious that the greatest stain on Mr Yeltsin's first presidency — the decision to intervene in Chechnia and the subsequent death of tens of thousands of people — had not been atoned for.

The boom of artillery across the Moscow river in a 30-gun salute to honour Russia's newly sworn-in president was answered a thousandfold from the charnel house of Grozny as Russian forces fought the third battle for the Chechen capital with unabated ferocity this week. Scores of soldiers, rebels and civilians have died. Alexander Lebed, Mr Yeltsin's national security adviser, is to be given unprecedented powers to solve the crisis, the expansionist general announced last week.

Fears that Mr Yeltsin's health will prevent him from serving a full four-year term, ushering in a backstage power struggle for a successor, were not allayed by the president's awkward appearance at the inauguration ceremony. He strode stately on to the stage in the Kremlin, in front of some 3,000 guests, and stood stiffly for 16 minutes, swearing the oath with his hand on a copy of the constitution. He spoke slowly and slurred his words as he undertook to "loyally serve the people".

The ceremony, broadcast live on Russian television, was intended to lay down a tradition for the democratic handover of power. Its last-minute scaling down — from an hour-long event on the Kremlin's Cathedral Square to a brief civil ceremony — increased doubts about Mr Yeltsin's strength.

Mr Yeltsin's pre-election theatrical peace-treaty signing ceremony with the separatist leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev in the Kremlin, and his lightning visit to Chechnia, where he told Russian troops that the war was over and they had won, have turned out to be bogus.

So, too, says Valentina Melnikova of the Committee for Soldiers' Mothers, was the president's clear undertaking in May that Russian conscripts would no longer be forced to serve in Chechnia. "They're sending conscripts there,

just the same as they did before. Nothing has changed," she said. "They just move one regiment out and put another one in."

Promises to spend billions of dollars rebuilding the ruined city of Grozny are also in question. Presidential and governmental decrees on Chechen reconstruction are on a list of 56 high-cost pledges, many linked to the presidential election campaign, due to be axed by a team set up to keep the budget deficit within the limits agreed with the International Monetary Fund.

Details of the team's work, published in Sevodnya newspaper this week, show that the list includes a decree on Chechen reconstruction worth about \$3 billion. Another is a \$45 million programme to protect min-threatened judges, a key item in Mr Lebed's plans to end crime and corruption.

The economics minister, Yevgeny Yasin, admitted last week that the government did not have the money to fulfil the president's promises. "All instructions of the president will be fulfilled. The major issue concerns the terms, and when it will be possible to find these assets," he said.

But it is Mr Yeltsin's fragile health rather than his hollow promises that really threatens his hold on power. Few who voted for him believed his cornucopian pledges of peace and roubles by the cubic metre.

"Nobody expected he would pay. Everybody understood they were just election promises. The same with Chechnia. Politics everywhere is a cynical business," said Sergei Markov of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Moscow.

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Hostage wives search for truth 25

Austria	AS30	Melle	45c
Belgium	SF75	Netherlands	G 4.76
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 19	Saudi Arabia	SF 5.80
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 18
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.80



Police intervene as Turkish Cypriots beat a Greek Cypriot during clashes across the partitioned island at the weekend. A Greek Cypriot was killed and more than 50 people from both sides of the communal divide were injured during a protest against Turkey's occupation of the north

PHOTOGRAPH: COSTAS FRANKIDES

Khmer Rouge troops turn against Pol Pot

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

CAMBODIA'S western border with Thailand is expected to be the scene of another uprising in fighting — this time between different units of the Khmer Rouge.

The commanders of two Khmer Rouge divisions, with an estimated 3,000 troops occupying strategic points on the border, are breaking from Pol Pot and suing for peace with Phnom Penh.

Barely two months after the emergence of rumours — never substantiated — that Pol Pot was dead, a schism has developed in the leadership of the Khmer Rouge.

Speculation now centres on the intentions and whereabouts of Ieng Sary, one of Pol Pot's oldest and closest associates. Khmer Rouge radio has denounced him for treachery, saying he should be executed for allowing government troops into guerrilla-held territory.

The diplomatic rumour mill suggests that Mr Sary, who is also closely identified with the brutal horrors of Khmer Rouge rule, may have arrived in Bangkok to negotiate a deal with Phnom Penh to be allowed in from the jungle.

Cambodia's joint prime minister, Hun Sen, once bitterly hostile to a deal with Khmer Rouge leaders, appears to have made an about-turn, saying last week that Mr Sary could not expect a ministerial appointment but promising defectors official positions and property.

The two divisional commanders controlling Phnom Malai and Pailin have issued statements saying that they now follow Mr Sary and are seeking national reconciliation. They also appear to be marshalling their forces to repel possible attacks by forces loyal to Pol Pot and his hardcore military chiefs.

Mr Sen, who prematurely claimed last week that the two commanders had defected, said on Monday that they had now linked up with government forces near the border town of

Poipet, and hailed them as "our brothers and sisters". He added that the Khmer Rouge command had ordered its forces to attack them.

Khmer Rouge radio said on Monday that separate committees had been appointed to manage the Malai and Pailin areas. But the leadership now faces either a bloody operation to reclaim them or the loss of key positions in the defence of the Khmer Rouge heartland.

Malai has long been an impregnable base, offering easy access to Thailand and within striking range of the only major road linking Thailand and government-controlled towns. Pailin lies near the centre of lucrative Khmer Rouge gem-mining and timber operations.

The defection of several thousand troops is a body blow to Pol Pot's rump command, already thought to have shrunk to fewer than 10,000 men. If Malai and Pailin slide into government control, Pol Pot's army will be largely confined to a remote hinterland of forest and mountain.

MoD admits nuclear weapons accident

Seumas Milne

THE Ministry of Defence on Monday began to buckle under the pressure of evidence and admitted there had been accidents involving nuclear weapons at American air bases in Britain. But it dismissed such incidents as "minor".

The MoD claimed formerly secret RAF records of a serious accident involving a "2,000lb nuclear weapon" at Wittering, near Cambridge, had meant to refer to a dummy bomb training accident. It denied that newly

revealed documents exposed 44 years of cover-up.

Despite the admission, the MoD clung to its longstanding insistence that "there has never been an accident involving damage to a nuclear weapon in the UK". A spokeswoman said: "At the most we are talking about scratches to nuclear weapons. Somebody might have dropped it a foot on to the ground, which would probably not even result in a scratch, but it is classified as an accident."

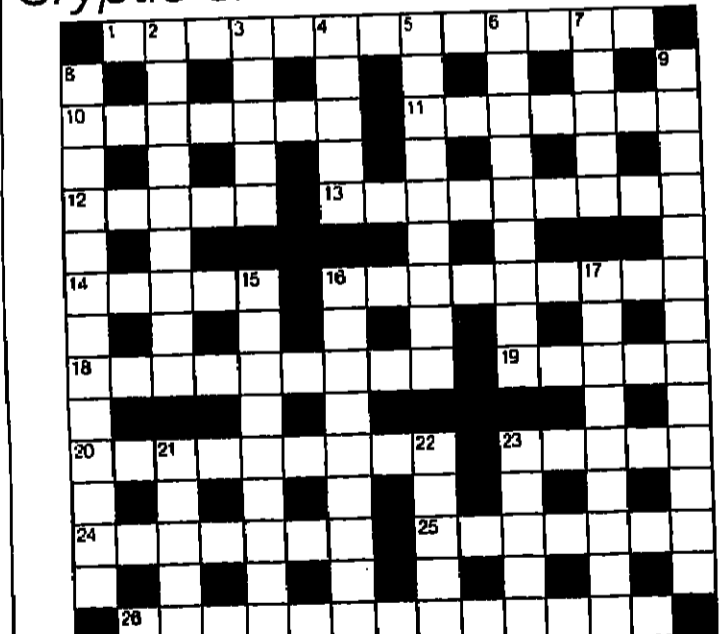
She was unable to explain why a squadron commander at RAF

Wittering had reported "serious damage to a nuclear weapon" in May 1959. It was too long ago to investigate.

The Government's attempts to explain away documentary evidence of a nuclear weapons accident is unlikely to satisfy demands for a full account. The denials were dismissed as implausible by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which has been the conduit for several leaked documents.

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Cryptic crossword by Chifonie



- Across**
- Keep quiet! To talk rubbish is out of order (8, 2, 5)
 - Become aware that lies are risky (7)
 - A passion for European travel (7)
 - A girl is caught in wire netting (5)
 - Lib. defies whipl! That shows scepticism (9)
 - Acknowledge juvenile's not Conservative (5)
 - Lord eats a consommé that's far from clear! (9)
 - Enclosed area stocked with drink is a challenge to those in the pub (4, 2, 3)
 - Have a strong drink before hard trek (5)
 - Greek goddess gets washed. That's hard and dangerous! (9)
 - Direct attention to umpire's hesitation (5)
 - Hermit's ulcer's troublesome. Ambulance finally is here (7)
 - Ergo, a country in Africa's a country in Africa (7)
 - Small book stolen by one into corruption (6,7)
 - Agent loses head and hugs celebrity artist (9)
- Down**

Golf Volvo Scandinavian Masters

Westwood, a Masters blaster

MICHAEL BRITTEN in Gothenburg

LEE WESTWOOD capped three months of enviable consistency on Sunday by seizing his first European Tour victory at the Forsgarden Club. The 23-year-old became the Volvo Scandinavian Masters champion when he holed a putt from 40 feet at the second extra hole.

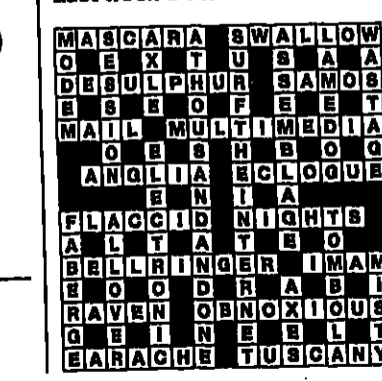
He defeated Russell Claydon and Paul Broadhurst in the sudden-death play-off after all three English golfers had shot final rounds of 68 to tie on 281, seven under par and one stroke ahead of the Spaniard Santiago Luna.

Broadhurst was the first to succumb when the trio returned to the 449-yard 18th. After driving into a bunker and missing from eight feet he could not match his rivals' scrambled pars. It was his fourth successive play-off failure.

On the second visit Westwood again missed the green but sank the most important putt of his fledgling career from the front edge for a birdie three. Claydon missed his putt from 25 feet.

Westwood included Colin Montgomerie, Ian Woosnam, Bernhard Langer and John Daly among his victims; the American "surrendering" with a typically flamboyant gesture by throwing his titanium driver into a pond

Last week's solution



Special 10p

Marchers change their tune in Ulster

David Sharrock

THE year's most tense weekend of loyalist and republican parades in Northern Ireland ended with relief that the worst of the marching season is over.

Thousands of republicans rallied in Belfast on Sunday to commemorate the 25th anniversary of internment but heeded calls from the platform to disperse quietly. Security was tight and police kept flag-waving loyalists behind a cordon of armoured vehicles as the Sinn Féin supporters passed close to the Shankill Road.

The rally took place after sporadic overnight violence in Londonderry. An Apprentice Boys rally there on Saturday had threatened to plunge Ulster back into widespread violence, but the Protestant organisation defused the tension by

accepting a police ban on marching along a stretch of the city's walls which overlook Catholic Bogside.

Barbed wire, steel rods and concrete barriers blocked the route which 250 local members of the Apprentice Boys had hoped to walk. Beneath the contested stretch of wall lies the Bogside, where nationalists also rallied in a dangerous game of showmanship which threatened to topple Northern Ireland back into serious violence.

But the mood in the city was oddly relaxed on Saturday morning, as if both sides had stepped back after a week of stormy negotiations, conscious of what was at stake. The Apprentice Boys made a symbolic but peaceful demonstration against what they claim is an attempt by the city's Catholic majority to strip them of their cultural heritage.

During the course of the Trou-

bles, 16,000 of the city's Protestants have decamped and resettled in the Waterside. Today, Londonderry is effectively two cities.

Protestants believe the IRA's campaign of violence in Derry effectively ended some years before the 1994 ceasefire because the republicans had already achieved their goals. However, the parades issue opens up a new front. "It's a continuation of the war without guns by the IRA," said George Glenn, chairman of the Fountain Area Partnership.

Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, did not speak at the Belfast rally on Sunday beyond introducing the main address, delivered by Dodie McGuinness.

Ms McGuinness, who was elected to represent West Belfast in the May elections, concentrated on Sinn Féin's increasing electoral support and the need for a comprehensive

settlement of the annual marching season crisis. "We uphold the right of the loyal institutions to march but that does not include the right to march over anyone," she said. "We don't have to like what unionism represents... but we do not seek to destroy the heritage or culture of that Protestant community."

Mr Adams later added: "It is not a security problem, it is a political problem. The annual crisis of marches can be resolved if there is a proactive policy by the British government."

He said the decision of the Apprentice Boys' governor, Alistair Simpson, to negotiate with Bogside residents "shows the stupidity and bigotry of David Trimble's position" not to talk to people in the Garvaghy Road, Portadown, during last month's stand-off with the Orange Order at Drumcree.

'Untouchable' quangos paid £60bn a year

Rebecca Smithers

NON-ELECTED quangos account for one-third of all central government spending while the people who run them are an "untouchable" and secretive elite, according to a report last week.

Despite the Conservative Government's pledge to reduce the numbers, powers, and costs of the bodies when it came to power in 1979, the report lists 6,424 executive and advisory quangos which together spent £60.4 billion in 1994-1995 — a 45 per cent increase in their spending in real terms over the last 17 years.

The Untouchables, published by the Democratic Audit and the Scarman Trust, says there are now 5,750 top-tier "executive" quangos in Britain — one for every 10,000 people. Yet the Government recognises only 301 of these in its official "quango count".

It draws the distinction between executive quangos, which are direct instruments of government policy and deal with issues such as education, public housing, and health care, and advisory quangos, which form a "near invisible layer of government".

There are 674 advisory quangos that give advice for ministerial discussion and legislation.

The authors of the report — Wendy Hall and Stuart Weir of Essex university — calculate that there are between 66,000 and 73,500 people who run quangos, nearly all of them appointed by the Government or self-appointing.

Ms Hall said: "The Nolan committee's proposals on vetting members of quangos only scratch at the surface."

"Britain's quangos are among the most secretive and undemocratic in the Western world, and they urgently require reform. The great majority of the public want to make them legally open and accountable. It is time MPs of all parties responded."

Short attacks Blair's 'men in the dark'

David Hencke

CLARE SHORT, the controversial shadow cabinet minister, last week accused her leader's advisers of jeopardising a Labour victory at the general election and threatening its existence.

"If we don't win, it will be the end of Labour as a party of power at least for a generation, if not forever," she said in an interview in the New Statesman magazine.

"I think the obsession with the media and the focus groups is making us look as if we want power at any price and that we don't stand for anything. And the people who think Tony has got to look very strong are making him less attractive than he is. This is a very stupid thing to do."

Ms Short, demoted in Mr Blair's shadow cabinet reshuffle last month, said: "He came along as a fresh, young, principled and decent man and some people are trying to turn him into macho man. I know they are doing it because they think it is the way to win, but I think they're making the wrong judgement and they endanger our victory."

Labour was clearly distressed by Ms Short's intervention. Deputy



Short shrift... party advisers 'endanger our victory'

Labour leader John Prescott said: "I am saddened to read what Clare Short has said. I am sure some of her remarks will be blown up out of all proportion. And, as she will agree with me, the Tories remain the real enemy at whom we should be directing all our fire."

Ms Short's attack came a day after a Guardian poll showed the Labour lead ebbing away. Although she named no names, her comments were clearly aimed at Mr Blair's inner advisers, including Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell, who have been accused of briefing against her to journalists.

The creation of "focus groups" where selected voters give their opinion to the party has been one of Mr Mandelson's key strategies.

In a swipe at their activities, Ms Short said: "I sometimes call them the people who live in the dark. Everything they do is in hiding."

She added: "These people are making a terrible error. They think that Labour is unelectable, so they want to get something else elected, even though really it is still the Labour party. This is a dangerous game, which assumes people are stupid."

"My life opportunities were brought to me by Labour and what they are now doing is allowing the Tory propaganda version of Labour to be reality. They are saying 'Vote for Tony Blair's New Labour. We all agree the old one was appalling and you all know that most of the people in Labour are really the old ones, but we've got some who are nothing

to do with that, vote for us.' One, that is a lie. And two, it's dangerous. I think they are profoundly wrong."

Ms Short described Mr Blair as two people — one likeable figure, the other a Frankenstein creation of the "people in the dark".

"Tony and I had a get-together last night. I had a talk with nice Tony Blair. I really like that one. I think that's the real one." Of the other, the macho, figure, she said: "I think he comes out in the dark."

She also expressed alarm at the way the shadow cabinet conducts business in private. "I've had this experience of some people who are meant to be on my side, one of whom I thought was a really good friend, being dishonest and trying to damage me. If you don't expect it, it's shocking."

Conservative party chairman Brian Mawhinney said of the article: "Clare Short has made it clear that the leadership of the Labour party hate each other and do not trust each other or Mr Blair. She is to be commended for her honesty."

Mr Prescott last week finally won a battle to silence Mr Mandelson. Mr Prescott, in charge of the party while Mr Blair is on holiday, said he, rather than Mr Mandelson, who is

Scientists test vaccine to beat cancer

Chris Mihill

CANCER scientists last week said trials of a vaccine that could beat cervical cancer are to start shortly.

Researchers are also looking for commercial backing to test a vaccine that could prevent glandular fever as well as a number of cancers associated with it.

A report from the Cancer Research Campaign says between 10 and 15 per cent of all cancers worldwide are linked to some form of virus, and it is probable that other viruses yet to be identified could trigger other forms of the illness.

Identifying viruses as a cause of cancer opens the way for the development of vaccines, either as a form of treatment to boost the immune system of the cancer victims or, in some cases, to prevent the disease.

Lesley Walker, the campaign's head of information, said five viruses had been definitely linked to cancer and work was under way to find methods of countering these.

Early human trials had started using a vaccine against the HPV virus, which can trigger cervical cancer, and these studies were to be extended later this year.

Dr Walker said the campaign was looking for a commercial partner to test a vaccine it has developed against the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), which causes a range of cancers and also glandular fever.

In Africa, EBV in combination with malaria can produce a cancer of the lymph system in children known as Burkitt's lymphoma. It is also believed to be a trigger for a nasal cancer common in China, and is increasingly being linked to a common form of lymph cancer, Hodgkin's disease.

The virus is also a cause of lymph cancer in patients who have undergone bone marrow or organ transplants, because their immune system is suppressed.

Dr Walker said the vaccine would also stop glandular fever. The virus was carried by most people, and usually held in check by the immune system. Most picked it up as babies where it caused few symptoms, but among teenagers not exposed in infancy, it could trigger glandular fever.



On yer bike... Protesters from the anti-car pressure group Reclaim The Streets surround motorists in Trafalgar Square during last week's rally against cuts in public transport. Campaigners brought chaos to London's rush hour to show solidarity with striking Underground drivers

Redwood call to end Royal Mail's monopoly

Seumas Milne

THE Government's efforts to exploit the postal strikes for political advantage were upstaged last week when the rightwing Tory leadership hopeful John Redwood called for the temporary suspension of the Royal Mail's letter monopoly to be made permanent.

As the postal workers' national programme of one-day strikes resumed and London Underground drivers had a seventh stoppage, Mr Redwood's plea for full deregulation was taken up by the parcels delivery firm White Arrow.

Echoing the views of the other main private courier companies — TNT, UPS and DHL — a spokeswoman for White Arrow said it was "simply not a commercial reality" to take advantage of a temporary letter monopoly suspension, even if the current one month was extended to three.

She said if the monopoly was permanently removed, there was a strong possibility that the firm would "get into letter post in a big way". She refused to comment on

what discussions the company had had with government.

Another private delivery service, City Post, claimed to be the first company to have taken advantage of the monopoly suspension, offering a same-day service for existing customers in London during the Communication Workers' Union's fourth 24-hour stoppage in the dispute over working conditions.

The intervention by Mr Redwood threatened to undermine ministers' efforts to embarrass the Labour party over the post and Underground disputes and drew an irritable response from the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, who was forced to warn against the potential threat to the universal price and delivery service from full-scale deregulation. He had earlier dropped broad hints about the likelihood of new Post Office break-up and privatisation proposals featuring in the forthcoming Conservative manifesto.

Post Office managers last week claimed the first significant cracks in their employees' support for industrial action, with 14,000 working

on the morning shift — about 15 per cent of those eligible — compared with 11,000 on the last strike day in July. The CWU disputed the figures. Management is sending a copy of last month's rejected agreement to each of the 130,000 delivery and sorting workers.

Meanwhile underground union leaders last week revealed a deal they had offered London Transport, that traded three years of below-inflation pay settlements for a 35-hour week by August 1998.

It was rejected as too expensive by managers, who are also refusing to make a one-hour cut in the working week to 37½ hours that the unions insist was agreed last year.

But this week's eighth tube strike, scheduled for Tuesday, was called off at the last minute as unions agreed to vote on new proposals. The unions decided to recommend the new offer to their drivers. Acceptance of the deal would mean an end to the two-month dispute. There are four more one-day strikes scheduled.

Gay rage over 'cures'

THE gay pressure group OutRage last week called on the Department of Health to compensate gay men who had been subjected to aversion therapy to "cure" their homosexuality, writes Chris Mihill.

The procedure involved electric shocks or nausea-inducing drugs while patients were shown homophobic images.

The treatment occurred in the 1960s and 1970s but OutRage said many men were left with lasting psychological damage. The group said that some who underwent the treatment were as young as 14, and at least one man died as a result.

OutRage has written to the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, urging him to set up an inquiry and to establish how many gay men had been harmed by the treatment. It wants compensation for those damaged, and a ban on use of therapies aimed at "curing" homosexuality.

Blacks and Asians still at social disadvantage

David Brindle

BLACK and Asian people remain disadvantaged on most major social and economic indicators, an official report suggests.

Some groups, notably Indians, are doing relatively well in areas such as education and home ownership, but ethnic minorities generally fare worse than whites on grounds of unemployment, pay, housing, or as crime victims.

The report, Social Focus on Ethnic Minorities, is published by the Office for National Statistics and is a compilation of data mostly in the public domain already. Until recently there was official reluctance to collect statistics broken down by race.

More than 3 million people, just under 6 per cent of the population, are non-white. Only 34 per cent of children of black Caribbean descent are living with a married man and woman, 54 per cent are with a lone mother. By contrast, 90 per cent of children from Asian communities are with a married couple.

Similarly, 83 per cent of Indian households own or are buying their own homes, compared with 36 per cent of Bangladeshi and 40 per cent of black households.

In education, Asian children do better at GCSEs than all other groups, including whites. At age 18, 65 per cent of Indians, 61 per cent of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, 72 per cent of other Asians and 50 per cent of blacks are in full-time education, compared with 38 per cent of whites. But, unemployment is far higher among all minorities than among whites.

On pay, average hourly full-time rates are as low as £4.78 for Pakistani/Bangladeshi women, compared with £6.59 for white women, and only £6.87 for Pakistani/Bangladeshi men, against £8.34 for whites.

All minority groups are statistically more likely than whites to be victims of both personal and property crimes. But, the report points out that crime rates are higher in inner city areas, where most blacks and Asians live.

Police not charged over deaths

NO POLICE officer will be charged over the death in custody of Shiji Lapite, a Nigerian asylum seeker whom a jury decided was unlawfully killed, writes Duncan Campbell.

Last week's decision came in the same week as it was announced that there would be no prosecution relating to Wayne Douglas, a man whose death in custody sparked the Brixton riots of last December. It also follows a verdict of manslaughter by an inquest jury on Brian Douglas (no relation), who died after being struck by a new-style police baton in May last year.

The Crown Prosecution

Service said no officer would be prosecuted over the death of Lapite, who died, aged 34, of asphyxiation after being put in a neckhold when arrested on suspicion of possessing drugs in December 1994. His family is said to be considering a private prosecution.

The Metropolitan Police publicly expressed its regret at Brian Douglas's death, the first involving the new baton, and said it would study recommendations on baton use.

Mr Douglas's brother said the verdict was a "gross injustice" and that the family would consider a private prosecution.



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She'll be 16

Sulking Israeli Minister Boycotts His Job

Barton Gellman in Jerusalem

FOREIGN Minister David Levy, whose four-year feud with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu receded briefly around election day, is doing again what he does better than any rival in Israeli political life: nursing his wounded dignity and threatening to resign.

The second-ranking figure in Netanyahu's government, Levy boycotted the Cabinet meeting last week and maintained an injured silence from his small-town power base of Beit Shean. Through airies in his Geshet Party, which split from Netanyahu's Likud but allied with it for last May's election, he made known that he will quit the post if Netanyahu does not accord him a larger role.

There is no policy or ideological dispute beneath this latest spat, and it cannot threaten Netanyahu's grip on power without stupendous miscalculations by both men. But the drama over Levy's prerogatives and pride has been more than enough to occupy the country's political junkies for several days.

Like many a foreign minister here before him, Levy feels pushed to the margins of his ostensible bailiwick. Neither he nor any senior aide accompanied Netanyahu on his visits to Washington and Amman, and Levy has not even been notified of the secret diplomacy of Dore Gold, a close Netanyahu aide, to several Arab states. When Netanyahu did not bother telling him about secret overtures to Levy's native Morocco, Levy stopped showing up for work and began making rumblings that he would quit.

Much the same tactic has worked often enough for Levy that it could fairly be called the basis of his political career. Resignation threats in recent years landed him the foreign

minister's job under former Premier Yitzhak Shamir, forced Shamir and then Netanyahu to tear up their lists of parliamentary candidates to make room for Levy's political machine, and landed him second billing under Netanyahu over figures far more popular in the Likud party and the public at large.

One reason for Levy's success is that his well-developed sense of grievance resonates with others among Israel's large cohort of Sephardic Jews, whose families come from north Africa and the Middle East and who resent the longstanding dominance of European-stock Jews like Netanyahu in Israeli society. The Sephardi vote is essential to the Likud's electoral success.

But Levy has often had a stronger hand to play than he seems to have now. Netanyahu managed to bring him on board for the last three months of the spring election campaign, and without Levy he might well have lost. But as Israel's first directly elected premier, Netanyahu now depends less on coalition partners than his predecessors did to remain in power.

Even if Levy does resign and all six Geshet members of parliament leave the governing coalition — a scenario that still looks remote — Netanyahu would still have a bare majority. He could only lose that if additional Levy sympathizers such as Ariel Sharon, who nurses his own grievances against Netanyahu, were willing to bring the government down and force new elections.

What makes the story irresistible to Israelis, nevertheless, is the obvious personal loathing between Levy, 58, and Netanyahu, 46, who was the silver-haired foreign minister's deputy in the last Likud government and went on to defeat him as party leader. Their bitter struggle for power, which included false charges



David Levy (left) meeting Yasser Arafat last month. The Israeli foreign minister is demanding a larger role, but there is personal loathing between him and the prime minister. PHOTO: HAWAUK LEVISON

by Netanyahu that Levy was blackmailing him, left Levy unwilling to speak to Netanyahu — or even utter his name — for some three years. He used to refer to him in public as "that man."

Among Levy's demands at present is that he control the choice of chief negotiator with the Palestinians, a job that remains unfilled.

Netanyahu gave a tart reply in a televised interview last week. "I was elected in personal elections in order to promote a certain policy, and at the heart of the policy is the Palestinian issue," he said. "I mean to control it in partnership with the foreign minister, but I mean to lead. There is only one prime minister."

he owes no political favors to anyone. For the first time, he is hitting everyone with taxes.

In an interview last week, Preval showed up on time, wearing a casual shirt and loafers. Aristide was seldom seen in the palace out of a three-piece suit, and his appointments often ran hours behind schedule.

Speaking partly in English and partly through an interpreter, Preval told jokes on himself and said being president was "boring," because people only spoke to him as the president, "not as Rene. We mostly discuss politics, even my friends talk politics, not about our families or children."

Asked what his biggest accomplishment was, Preval said he had "remained true to myself."

"I clearly see where I want to go," Preval said. "I know I can't do everything in five years, so I set myself specific objectives."

Preval said his first and most difficult objective is economic recovery, followed by reforming the police and the judicial system, and decentralizing the state's power in favor of local governments. He spoke forcefully of the need to modernize the state and break the power of the elite families.

For 10 years, he noted, these families have been asking for exceptionally high tariffs on imported goods until their own businesses became more competitive. "In 10 years they have been unable to modernize," Preval said. "Now, for them, it is sudden death."

Children Without A Country

EDITORIAL

IMMIGRANT-BASHING is about to reach a new low this week, as Republicans begin to take up platform language that would deny birthright citizenship to the children of illegal aliens.

The proposal seeks either "a constitutional amendment or constitutionally valid legislation declaring that children born in the United States of parents illegally present are not automatically citizens."

This startling and truly mean proposition would dramatically change not only the constitutional promise of the 14th Amendment, but also a bedrock principle of this democracy: No matter where you come from or who your parents are, if you are born on this soil, you are forever an American.

There are all sorts of practical reasons for rejecting this change.

Would hospitals, for example, have to assume new responsibilities for investigating the citizenship status of new mothers before registering births? Would obtaining a passport require not just a birth certificate, but also a long-deceased parent's green card?

Would the disqualification apply to generation after generation of children because the first immigrant didn't have his papers in order? Would they be eligible for naturalization even though their parents remained in illegal status?

And if discovered, stateless by constitutional amendment, should they be deported — to where? — or should they perhaps be imprisoned for the rest of their lives?

We are sure that there are Republicans who have answers for these questions, who could construct a set of rules to their liking and enforce them with enthusiasm. So uncertainty is not a reason for rejecting this platform plank. History is.

Once before, this country denied citizenship to an entire class of native-born Americans, whose ancestors had come from Africa not with visas but listed on bills of sale. A great war was fought over their status in this society, and it was resolved in favor of citizenship and full freedom.

For well over 128 years, every individual born within the boundaries of the United States has started out in life as the political equal of every other child born in the country on that day.

It would be not only destructive, but also incredibly vindictive, to take that gift from some on the pretext of saving money or in order to discourage a few desperate pregnant women from sneaking across the border in order that their children be guaranteed a better life.

Any thoughtful Republican ought to be mortified by this kind of language and make every effort to have it removed from the platform.

Rights Group Assails Peru's Anti-Terror Laws

Gabriel Escobar in Lima

AN INTERNATIONAL human rights group condemned Peru's counter-terrorism laws last week and urged President Alberto Fujimori to address immediately the plight of hundreds of people who may have been wrongly convicted.

The report by Human Rights Watch/Americas — which comes just a week after the U.N. Human Rights Committee issued its own rebuke — is one of the most broadly documented denunciations of many aimed at the anti-terrorist legislation since its inception four years ago.

Human rights leaders here credit the international campaign of condemnation — which has involved the U.S. State Department, the Roman Catholic Church and the European Union among many governments and groups — with forcing Fujimori to ease his hard-line stance. Over the last two months, in a marked departure from his prior position, the president has acknowledged that some people have been unjustly detained and sentenced, and he proposed what he calls "a process of rectification."

At issue are repressive counter-terrorist measures that created a se-

cretive judicial and penal system to process and punish members of two revolutionary guerrilla groups responsible for a wave of bombings and assassinations that began in 1980 — Shining Path and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement. But with its reliance on "faceless" judges, military tribunals and restrictions on due process — including alleged torture — the system has been the target of continuous criticism by human rights groups both here and abroad.

The principal mitigating measure proposed by Fujimori is creation of a high-level commission that would in-

vestigate and perhaps pardon "the innocents" — as the estimated 500 Peruvians said to have been wrongly imprisoned are known here. The commission proposal is one of several made by the government recently; another calls for appointment of a human rights ombudsman.

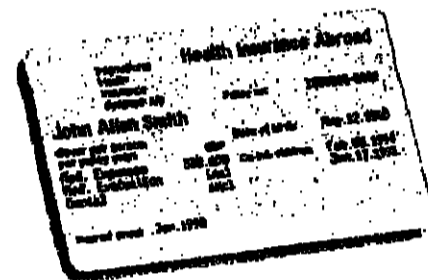
But the commission would have no effect on the anti-terrorist tribunals, which will continue to operate. And even those who might be pardoned by the panel would still be considered guilty under Peruvian law. "It resolves the problem of their freedom but not the root of the problem, which is that they are innocent,"

said Francisco Soberon, of Peru's Pro-Human Rights Association. But like other human rights workers, Soberon said that perhaps the biggest advance on the issue has been Fujimori's acknowledgment that a problem exists. Their hope now is that the government will adopt some of the recommendations in the Human Rights Watch report.

Called "Presumption of Guilt: Human Rights Violations and the Faceless Courts in Peru," the report calls for a review of more than 5,000 cases, abolition of military courts and a restoration of a defendant's basic rights — including the right of the defense to cross-examine prosecution witnesses.

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